INTRODUCTION TO CSPD

The purpose of this manual is to provide information for stakeholders regarding the Montana Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) system and process. These materials are also intended to acquaint new members with their role and responsibilities as a CSPD state/regional council member.

The Montana Office of Public Instruction would like to express a special thanks for your willingness to volunteer for this important assignment. Your participation will lead to positive results for programs and services provided to students with disabilities in Montana schools.

The key component of Montana CSPD is collaboration. As a member, you will work closely with educators and parents throughout the region/state to implement the CSPD strategic plan and other activities developed by the CSPD Council.

The materials in this manual will give you a foundation of how CSPD works in Montana.

If you have any questions regarding the materials, please contact regional or state CSPD representatives.

> COMING TOGETHER IS A BEGINNING
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> KEEPING TOGETHER IS PROGRESS
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> WORKING TOGETHER IS SUCCESS.
>
> *HENRY FORD*

OVERVIEW
COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

Special education law has required states to have a Comprehensive Systems of Personnel Development (CSPD) since 1975. Each state must develop a system to ensure that all education personnel are adequately prepared and receive continuing education. This helps teachers by ensuring that they are trained to do their work and guards against serious personnel shortages. The IDEA amendments of 1997 P.L. 105-17 included an increased emphasis on improving school staff and parent skills. State improvement grants were offered on a competition basis for states. Montana received a five year improvement grant; the additional resources will greatly enhance Montana's capacity to provide inservice and technical assistance.

CSPD is a process which includes preservice, inservice, and technical assistance for parents, general education teachers, special education staff, administrators and other service providers with the end result being better programs and services for students with disabilities. This is accomplished by collaborating with all stakeholders, disseminating best practices, and the evaluation of CSPD activities.

The CSPD system is a sum of the parts. The following is a brief description of critical CSPD components that each stakeholder should understand.

PRESERVICE

Preservice is the preparation of certified and non-certified staff for employment as administrators and service providers for students with disabilities. Institutions of higher education are given the responsibility to prepare individuals with adequate skills that lead to quality services. CSPD will collaborate with higher education in strengthening educational training programs to help ensure quality staff. CSPD should be involved with certification issues and assuring collaboration between the various institutions of higher learning.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The state CSPD Council conducts an annual inservice needs assessment using a representative sample of certified staff. non-certified staff, and parents. The goal is to identify training needs, develop a system to evaluate CSPD components, activities, and projects, and ensure that each CSPD component includes collaboration. The results of the needs assessment is the catalyst for determining inservice training and technical assistance. The CSPD Council develops the needs assessment and disseminates the results to school districts and regional CSPD Councils.

INSERVICE

The state and regional CSPD Council and school districts provide relevant training for school staff and parents that improves skills in serving students with disabilities. Inservice is usually based upon data received from annual needs assessment and requirements that arise from the IEP process. The CSPD Council helps support and organize relevant inservice training.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
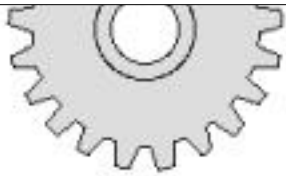
The state CSPD council has developed trainers and technical assistance providers for a wide variety of critical special education issues including transition, IEP development, working with students with behavioral difficulties, and inclusion. The end result will be quality education and services for students with disabilities. The CSPD Council is sensitive to the changing technical assistance needs of school districts and regional areas.

COLLABORATION

Collaboration involves sharing resources and information, setting common goals, and working together. Collaboration is the glue that holds the other CSPD components together. A main objective of CSPD is to offer opportunities for members of the educational community and parents to work together for a common cause, namely improving services to students with disabilities.

The CSPD council is made up of a broad representative of stakeholders, including parents. Council meetings and activities offer the opportunity for CSPD stakeholders to communicate and collaborate with each other.

DISSEMINATION
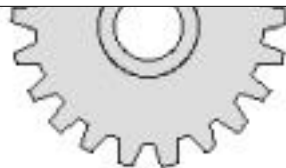
CSPD involves the dissemination of research validated educational and behavioral practices for service providers of students with disabilities. Promising practices are shared with educators and parents throughout the state.

The CSPD Council offers opportunities for individuals and organizations to discuss and disseminate materials at quarterly council meetings.

EVALUATION
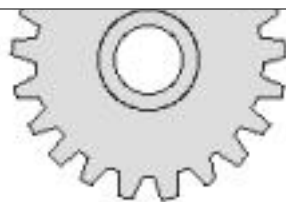
All CSPD activities should be evaluated regarding their outcome and impact to programs for students with disabilities. Evaluation helps determine if CSPD activities are making a real difference. Each section of the CSPD strategic plan should have an evaluation component. Evaluation results should be used as part of the decision making process.

RECRUITMENT — RETENTION

There are frequent shortages of qualified special education personnel, especially in rural areas. Planning and collaboration should occur at the state, regional and school district level to ensure an adequate staff to serve the needs of students with disabilities. Strategies need to be implemented that promote retaining qualified staff members.

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